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Implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem: follow-up to the high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in view of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Strengthening international cooperation in combating illicit opiates originating in Afghanistan through continuous and reinforced support to the Paris Pact initiative

Report of the Secretariat

Summary

In its resolution 56/3 entitled "Strengthening international cooperation in combating illicit opiates originating in Afghanistan through continuous and reinforced support to the Paris Pact initiative", the Commission on Narcotic Drugs welcomed and reiterated its support to the Paris Pact initiative as one of the most important frameworks and a unique platform for genuine partnership between States, competent international organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan. The Commission continued to call upon Member States, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other entities, to ensure the full implementation of the Vienna Declaration, the outcome document of the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan held on 16 February 2012, as the framework for all future action within the four agreed areas for enhanced cooperation. As requested by the Commission, the present report describes steps taken by UNODC to implement the resolution in 2015, the second year of implementation of the fourth phase of the initiative.

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I. Background

1. The Vienna Declaration adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan held on 16 February 2012,[1] is a statement of international commitment to act in a balanced and comprehensive manner against the menace of opiates originating in Afghanistan. In the Declaration, participants prioritized four main areas for enhanced cooperation, also known as pillars: strengthening and implementing regional initiatives to combat illicit traffic in opiates originating in Afghanistan; detecting and blocking financial flows linked to illicit traffic in opiates; preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of opiates in Afghanistan; and reducing drug abuse and dependence through a comprehensive approach. The Third Ministerial Conference was an important landmark for the Paris Pact, as partners reaffirmed their common and shared responsibility for combating opiates. The Vienna Declaration serves as a blueprint for the Paris Pact partnership's activities in acknowledgement of the need to mainstream counter-narcotics efforts and policy into building security, democracy and prosperity in Afghanistan.

2. Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 56/3 entitled "Strengthening international cooperation in combating illicit opiates originating in Afghanistan through continuous and reinforced support to the Paris Pact initiative" recognized the initiative's importance as one of the most significant international frameworks and a unique platform for genuine partnership between Member States, competent international organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan.[2] In the resolution, the Commission requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to provide regular reports to it on the progress achieved and measures taken in implementation of the fourth phase of the Paris Pact initiative.

3. The Paris Pact has two dimensions. The first is the partnership itself, made up of 58 countries and 22 organizations including UNODC. That partnership is responsible for defining priorities and implementing measures in line with the Vienna Declaration, following the principle of shared responsibility. The second dimension is the global programme established by UNODC on behalf of the partnership to provide coordination support through that global programme's three components: the consultative mechanism, the research and liaison officer network, and information management. The fourth phase of the programme, which is currently under way, was initially set up by the partners for three years (2013-2016) with a total budget of approximately $5 million.

4. The Paris Pact partnership continues to play a pivotal role as a global platform for concrete action aimed at the reduction of the illicit traffic in opiates, including the cultivation of opium poppy and the production and global consumption of opiates, by prioritizing technical assistance and providing stronger evidence for coordinated action.

[1] See E/CN.7/2012/17.

[2] See E/CN.7/2013/14.

5. The efforts taken by Paris Pact partners to combat the threat posed by opiates were further reinforced by Security Council resolution 2210 (2015) adopted on 16 March 2015, which welcomed the ongoing work of the Paris Pact initiative as one of the most important frameworks in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan, took note of the Vienna Declaration, and emphasized the aim of the Paris Pact to establish a broad international coalition to combat the traffic of illicit opiates, as part of a comprehensive approach to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan, the region and beyond. In the resolution, like in similar resolutions adopted in previous years, the Security Council stressed the importance of the initiative in countering the production, trafficking and consumption of opium and heroin from Afghanistan and the elimination of opium poppy crops, drug laboratories and stores as well as the interception of drug convoys.

6. Following the recommendations that resulted from the in-depth evaluation of the third phase of the UNODC Paris Pact initiative, the objective of its current fourth phase is to pursue an operationally oriented approach in line with the four priority areas for action as outlined in the Vienna Declaration, with a view to facilitating collaboration among the partners. The second year of implementation of the fourth phase, 2015, has been successfully completed with the partnership expressing a clear commitment to expanding the initiative's timeline and geographical coverage.

7. The Paris Pact is more relevant than ever among international frameworks and initiatives in the area of drug control and international cooperation. Those include the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process and other regional initiatives led by Paris Pact partners. The four areas for strengthened cooperation defined in the Vienna Declaration are fully in line with the topics of the forthcoming discussions at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016.

8. Activities implemented in support of the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.[3] The three pillars related to law enforcement fall within Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). Three pillars are particularly relevant to targets of the Sustainable Development Goals: the first pillar (regional initiatives) is relevant to target 16.a (Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime); the second pillar (financial flows linked to illicit traffic in opiates) to target 16.4 (By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime); and the fourth pillar (drug prevention and health) to target 3.5 (Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse).

[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

II. Status of implementation of Commission resolution 56/3

A. Strategic and expert-level dialogue

9. In line with the objectives for 2015, the second year of implementation of the fourth phase, set by Paris Pact partners in September 2014 at the eleventh Policy Consultative Group meeting, one expert working group meeting was held on each of the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration, and the Paris Pact Policy Consultative Group held its twelfth meeting, on 15 and 16 December 2015. A joint meeting of the three expert working groups covering the pillars related to law enforcement was hosted in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 1 to 5 June 2015, by the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre. This joint meeting is known as the "tri-fold expert working group" and, in particular, deals with regional initiatives (first pillar), financial flows linked to illicit traffic in opiates (second pillar) and the diversion of precursor chemicals (third pillar). The expert working group meeting held in Bishkek on 25 and 26 June 2015, which was hosted by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, covered drug prevention and health (fourth pillar). The expert-level meetings built on the discussions of previous expert forums held during 2014, the first year of implementation of the fourth phase.

10. The tri-fold expert meeting comprised separate thematic meetings dedicated to illicit financial flows, precursors and cross-border cooperation, as well as joint sessions to reflect the cross-cutting nature of the issues discussed.

11. The first two and a half days of the tri-fold meeting were dedicated to illicit financial flows (the second pillar) and included a joint session with the meeting on precursors, which focused on using financial investigations to counter the illicit supply in precursors. Participants explored the business model of the illicit opiate enterprise and the development and implementation of disruption strategies focused on effects. Other topics discussed were the development of a community of financial investigators at the national and international levels; supporting the disruption of drug trafficking with financial investigations; detecting, investigating and disrupting abuse of money and value transfer systems; developing good practices in regional and international alert systems, and understanding and disrupting "nexus" threats (e.g. drug trafficking and terrorism). For the first time the tri-fold expert working group invited major players from private sector financial services providers, which was instrumental in understanding the role of the private sector in countering illicit financial flows.

12. On the third and fourth days of its meeting, the tri-fold expert working group discussed precursors (the third pillar of the Vienna Declaration). Two joint sessions were held, one with the thematic meeting on illicit financial flows and another with the thematic meeting on cross-border cooperation, the latter focusing on maritime trafficking. Participants looked into ways to disrupt precursor trafficking through financial investigations and ways to use financial investigations to identify drug trafficking networks engaged in the illicit supply of precursors. They stressed the importance of private sector partnerships in tackling the criminal abuse of online purchase platforms. The meeting reviewed trends, routes and techniques used to smuggle precursor chemicals destined for use in illicit heroin production with a view to improving interregional cooperation and information-sharing.

13. The last two days of the tri-fold expert meeting were dedicated to cross-border cooperation (the first pillar of the Vienna Declaration) and included a joint session with the working group on precursors. Partners explored issues related to interregional cooperation and information-sharing. For the first time, maritime trafficking was an area of focus during a Paris Pact expert meeting, and for that reason organizations and programmes working specifically in that area were represented.

14. The tri-fold meeting was attended by 25 countries including Kenya, Oman and Qatar, as well as 10 international organizations, including the Combined Maritime Forces. The fact that these parties, which are not Paris Pact partners, participated for the first time, indicated that interest in the Pact's activities is growing.

15. The last of the 2015 expert-level forums, the working group meeting on community-based and outpatient treatment (the fourth pillar of the Vienna Declaration) coincided with World Drug Day. It focused on health-centred and comprehensive treatment measures in the community for people suffering from drug use disorders. Participants explored ways to increase the availability of treatment services in the community and to improve their effectiveness through utilization of the best scientific knowledge. Other issues discussed included a framework for development of health-centred and evidence-based outpatient treatment in the community, and the development or enhancement of already existing programmes for medication-assisted treatment. Partners also assessed progress and prioritized conclusions with concrete and measurable proposals for practicable development.

16. Reflecting the partnership's focus on developing adequate responses to the drug problem, each expert meeting aimed at identifying concrete actions required to address priority gaps under each of the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration. All 2015 expert meetings demonstrated the relevance of the cross-cutting approach to tackling opiate issues and the fact that global, regional and even national responses are not sustainable if presented in the form of stand-alone projects and structures.

17. The recommendations put forward by the expert working groups were considered and approved at the twelfth Policy Consultative Group meeting, held in Vienna on 15 and 16 December 2015, which resulted in a series of strategic discussions regarding the future of the initiative. The objectives of the meeting included a review of the gap analysis initiated at the expert meetings and further developed in subsequent months, a decision on priorities for expert dialogue in 2016, and a discussion on potential hosts for future expert working group meetings.

18. The twelfth Policy Consultative Group meeting further discussed and recognized the importance of cross-cutting issues related to the pillars of the Vienna Declaration related to law enforcement, such as research, financial investigations, information-sharing, capacity-building and legal frameworks, and looked into how those cross-cutting issues could be addressed in an integrated way. A number of UNODC programmes in support of the Paris Pact priorities were presented at the meeting with a view to outlining options for an integrated "one-UNODC" response.

19. Partners further indicated their interest in monitoring, as part of future expert-level discussions, the progress achieved under the newly adopted national drug action plan of Afghanistan. The national action plan aimed at decreasing the

cultivation of opium poppy and the production of opiates, while addressing issues related to drug demand reduction and drug treatment.

20. A key outcome of the event was the renewed commitment to the process, which the partners expressed unanimously. The partners also supported the extension of the current phase of the UNODC Paris Pact programme. Engaging with new donors and involving various members of the partnership in discussions was also among the aims of the policy meeting. The high-level meeting of partners for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, which was held on 14 December 2015, was organized in close coordination, and held back-to-back, with the Paris Pact policy meeting, which resulted in a particularly high level of representation at both events.

21. The growing recognition of the important role played by the Paris Pact is evidenced by the continued increase in the number of partners. Thus, the twelfth Policy Consultative Group meeting was the occasion for endorsing the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism as an additional Paris Pact partner.

B. Update on the UNODC Paris Pact programme in support of the initiative

22. The expert and policy meetings described above make up the first component of the Paris Pact programme, the consultative mechanism.

23. In support of the consultative mechanism, the Paris Pact Coordination Unit for the first time presented its new reporting format, the Paris Pact report for 2014, at the eleventh Policy Consultative Group meeting, held at the end of 2014, the first year of implementation of the fourth phase. The Paris Pact report for 2015 will be disseminated in early 2016. The report is put together at the request of the partnership. It is based on available information about the implementation of priority measures decided and recommendations made by expert working groups. The information contained in the report is in line with the Paris Pact mandate to strengthen cooperation among partners along the major drug trafficking routes, the focus of which is evolving from the northern route to the Balkan route, and further on to certain parts of the southern route.

24. In addition to the annual reporting exercise, the Paris Pact questionnaires about the first, third and fourth pillars (regional initiatives, the diversion of precursor chemicals, and drug prevention and health, respectively) were developed during 2014, the first year of implementation of the fourth phase, with a view to obtaining more comprehensive information on the implementation of those pillars. The Tashkent questionnaire, relating to illicit financial flows (the second pillar), was developed during the third phase of the initiative. At the time of writing of the present report, completed questionnaires had been received from 37 per cent of the Paris Pact partners. Once analysed, the information provided will be used as a basis for further expert discussions by the UNODC sections leading the process under each pillar.

25. During the reporting period, the network of Paris Pact research and liaison officers deployed along the northern and the Balkan routes contributed to the

preparation of a number of UNODC reports and studies, including the study "Drug money: the illicit proceeds of opiates trafficked on the Balkan route", which was prepared by the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch of the Division for Policy Analysis in collaboration with the regional section for Europe and for West and Central Asia through the regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries and the regional programme for South-Eastern Europe.

26. Data collection on developments along major opiate trafficking routes represents an important aspect of the research and liaison officers' work in support of the implementation of the Paris Pact mandate, and is performed under the technical guidance of the Afghan Opiate Trade Project and overall supervision of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch. The research and liaison officers, who are based at the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia, were closely involved in capacity-building for law enforcement officials in Central Asia and the wider region jointly with the Afghan Opiate Trade Project and the regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

27. The Drugs Monitoring Platform is an online tool that was jointly initiated and consistently supported with human and financial resources by the Paris Pact programme and the Afghan Opiate Trade Project. It is managed by the coordination and analysis unit based at the Regional Office for Central Asia, and supports the regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, and the programme for Central Asia. It has proved to be increasingly valuable, particularly in facilitating the implementation by the Paris Partnership of Commission resolution 56/3. It is a powerful mechanism for monitoring drug-related data by means of multi-layered mapping and for obtaining evidence on counter-narcotics developments and measures in support of the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration. The Platform can be used to create a comprehensive picture of the situation in the region and beyond, so that more information can be made available to stakeholders. The Platform is populated with data provided by Paris Pact partners, collected mainly by the field-based research and liaison officers and research staff working for the Afghan Opiate Trade Project. The Platform is part of the UNODC global data collection process and has a strong potential for growth in both volume and usability.

28. The Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM) was developed during the second phase of the Paris Pact initiative as an Internet-based tool for coordinating counter-narcotics technical assistance in countries along the main trafficking routes for opiates from Afghanistan. ADAM securely and instantly provides partners with essential information on who is doing what, where and when in the field of counter-narcotics. The aim is to avoid duplication of activities. In recent years, ADAM has been developed beyond its initial function as a project database and has evolved into an active information hub with a variety of additional functionalities that cover a wide array of issues related to the Paris Pact and, in particular, the implementation of the Vienna Declaration. The latter aspect was further refined during the reporting period to increase user-friendliness of the available functionalities.

C. Synergies

29. From its onset in 2003, the Paris Pact process gave rise to an interregional, interdivisional and inter-thematic approach by UNODC, the technical lead organization of the Paris Pact, involving coordination with relevant sections, units, programmes and partner organizations. These interconnections were further elaborated during the fourth phase.

30. The Paris Pact programme closely interacts with UNODC at the global, regional and country levels, including through the regional section for Europe and for West and Central Asia (through the regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, the regional programme for South-Eastern Europe and the programme for Central Asia), the justice section (through the Maritime Crime Programme), the Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch (through its implementation support section, the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, the global Container Control Programme and the new global programme on building effective networks against transnational organized crime), the Drug Prevention and Health Branch (through its prevention, treatment and rehabilitation section), the Research and Trend Analysis Branch (through its statistics and survey section, and the Afghan Opiate Trade Project).

31. Apart from its cooperation with UNODC, the Paris Pact programme has partnerships with organizations that play a leading role at the expert level, including the International Narcotics Control Board, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Police Office (Europol), the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and other actors that are interested in the Paris Pact's discussions but are not yet partners, such as the Combined Maritime Forces.

32. In addition to already well-established initiatives engendered by earlier Paris Pact discussions, important developments unfolded during the reporting period that were also rooted in the Paris Pact process. Those included the adoption by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of its resolution 58/6 on strengthening international cooperation in preventing and combating illicit financial flows linked to drug trafficking, from the anti-money-laundering perspective, and the "networking the networks" initiative, which is part of the new global programme on building effective networks against transnational organized crime.

33. The progress of the expert-level dialogue was largely driven by the active involvement of UNODC thematic lead experts from the Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch and the Drug Prevention and Health Branch, who provided technical guidance at all implementation stages related to organizing, conducting and following up the four thematic expert working groups during the reporting period.

34. The regional programmes continued to play an important role in operationalizing strategies by acting as the principal operational delivery vehicle for the Paris Pact in the respective regions. The regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, supported by the respective country and subregional programmes, is uniquely positioned to increase the coherence and effectiveness of Paris Pact partners' activities in the countries of the region.

35. However, newly emerging routes and trends in opiate trafficking pose new challenges and require the partnership to adjust accordingly, including by broadening the geographic coverage of the Paris Pact, in particular to include the southern opiate trafficking route. The growing importance of the southern route calls for more intense involvement in the Paris Pact by relevant thematic and regional programmes such as the Maritime Crime Programme and the regional programmes for the Arab States and East Africa.

36. The additional focus placed on the southern routes also requires improved data collection. Funding permitting, the fourth phase mandates the Paris Pact programme to expand the research and liaison officer network. Options for jointly stepping up research capacity are currently being explored with the Afghan Opiate Trade Project, and include making joint use of the field staff networks. In pursuing this approach, the Paris Pact programme will be working to engage with key regional players, who as partners to the initiative will be encouraged to extend their involvement.

D. Sustainability of the Paris Pact programme

37. Currently the fourth phase of the Paris Pact programme is financially supported by Austria, France, India, Norway, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. As a consequence of the continuous fundraising efforts of the Paris Pact Coordination Unit, discussions are under way with partners with a view to expanding the donor base to ensure consistent funding of the programme. The decision to extend the fourth phase, taken at the twelfth Policy Consultative Group meeting, will make it possible to implement the full agenda for 2016 (the third year of the fourth phase), which includes meetings of four expert working groups, an independent evaluation of the fourth phase, the thirteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting (which concludes the third year), and, potentially, a fourth Paris Pact ministerial conference proposed by partners for early 2017. The precise parameters of the programme's extension will be defined and partners informed at the start of 2016. At the time of writing the present report, funding for the Paris Pact programme had been secured until the end of March 2016 only, meaning that any activities beyond that date would require additional funding support.